



STUDENT SUCCESS COACHING IN HIGHER EDUCATION: A REVIEW OF LITERATURE

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ABSTRACT

Student success coaching has emerged as a vital support mechanism in higher education. It aims to bolster academic performance, personal development, and overall well-being. This paper reviews the literature on student success coaching and synthesizes existing research to illuminate its evolving landscape. The review delves into the nature of student success coaching, characterized by personalized guidance, frequent interactions, and a focus on individual students' needs. Definitions and models of student success coaching are explored, addressing students' diverse aspirations and challenges. Trends in student success coaching underscore its effectiveness in integrating students into academic and social aspects of postsecondary institutions, thereby breaking down barriers to success. Coaching interventions encompass goal setting, academic planning, and connection to resources, all geared toward facilitating student achievement. This paper identifies areas for further research, emphasizing the need to explore the effectiveness of coaching across diverse student populations and its long-term impact beyond immediate academic outcomes. Additionally, institutional factors and the role of technology in enhancing coaching programs are proposed as avenues for future inquiry.

KEYWORDS: Higher Education, Student Success Coaching

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, student success coaching has emerged as a multifaceted support system to enhance students' academic performance, personal development, and overall well-being. Personalized guidance, frequent interactions, and a focus on individual students characterize this coaching approach. With its roots embedded in higher education literature, student success coaching represents a proactive strategy to address students' diverse needs and aspirations within postsecondary institutions. The objective of this article is to provide a review of the literature on student success coaching. By synthesizing existing research, I aim to shed light on coaching interventions in higher education.

Definition

Student success coaching is a multifaceted support system designed to enhance students' academic performance, personal development, and overall well-being. Further, this coaching approach is characterized by personalized guidance, frequent interactions, and a focus on the individual student (Pechac & Slantcheva-Durst, 2021). However, various definitions of student success coaching exist within the literature, reflecting the diverse nature of coaching programs across institutions. For instance, Valentine and Price (2023) defined student success coaching as a comprehensive, individualized, and proactive strategy to deliver advising and support services to students to enhance persistence and elevate completion rates. As such, this definition emphasizes the centrality of students' needs and aspirations in the coaching process.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Trends in Student Success Coaching

Student success coaching provides students with an intentional way to reflect on their interests, academics, and goals and implement plans. Existing literature and theories on retention and persistence emphasize the effectiveness of comprehensive intervention programs in student success coaching. Research by Pechac and Slantcheva-Durst (2021) suggests that coaching helps students integrate into the social and academic aspects of postsecondary institutions, breaking down barriers to success. Further, many institutions offer various interventions, and student success coaching serves as a centralized point of contact, coordinating institutional interventions to support individual students best (Valentine & Price, 2023).

However, some students may need continual institutional support for success. Traditional student success monitoring systems often rely on reactive alerts, identifying issues after they have developed (Richman et al., 2014). Proactive intervention strategies offering personalized guidance and resources can significantly enhance these students' academic journeys. Further, coaches often employ various techniques to improve academic success, including goal setting, educational planning and support, and connection to resources.

Goal Setting

Literature on student success coaching underscores the positive impact of academic support on students' educational outcomes (Pechac & Slantcheva-Durst, 2021; Robinson & Gahagan, 2010). These studies demonstrated positive effects such as increased attendance, academic performance, and retention

rates. Student success coaches support students by helping them to set academic, career, and personal goals. To do this, they may partner with students to develop their short-term and long-term goals (Dahan et al., 2023). These plans go beyond academic targets, incorporating strategies to address challenges while instilling a sense of accountability (Hall et al., 2021).

Coaches regularly meet with students in this collaborative process to discuss and refine their action plans. These interactions serve as a platform for students to receive feedback and guidance, enabling them to make necessary adjustments to stay on course toward their goals. Thus, the iterative nature of goal setting is acknowledged, and coaches actively encourage students to reflect on their progress, identify challenges, and adapt their action plans accordingly. Robinson and Gahagan (2010) highlight the importance of self-assessment, goal setting, and reflection. Further, the holistic goal-setting approach equips students with a roadmap for overall success. By fostering ongoing dialogue and encouraging students to respond to changing circumstances proactively, student success coaches play a crucial role in empowering students to take ownership of their educational journey (Dahan et al., 2023).

Academic Planning and Support

In academic planning and support, student success coaches are crucial in guiding students toward accelerated credential attainment through comprehensive advising practices. This role fosters a collaborative approach that considers students' academic abilities, work commitments, personal schedules, and other pertinent factors (Hall et al., 2021). As such, student success coaches actively encourage students to engage in semester-by-semester planning of their coursework and schedules. Students can create tailored plans that align with their capabilities and goals by considering various elements such as workload capacity, personal commitments, and academic strengths (Valentine & Price, 2023). This personalized approach ensures that academic planning becomes dynamic and adaptive, reflecting each student's evolving needs and circumstances.

Student success coaches might employ learning assessment tools to enhance further academic preparation and evaluate students' unique learning styles. By gaining insights into how students absorb and process information most effectively, coaches can provide targeted guidance on implementing appropriate study strategies (Jeffries, 2010). This personalized approach maximizes the efficiency of study efforts and promotes a deeper understanding of the material.

In essence, the role of student success coaches in academic planning and support extends beyond conventional advising. It involves actively engaging students in planning, considering their contexts, and leveraging assessment tools to tailor support strategies. Therefore, this collaborative and personalized approach aims to facilitate accelerated credential attainment and equip students with the tools they need for academic success.

Connection to Resources

Student success coaches are pivotal in establishing an effective student support system through collaboration with various on-

and off-campus resources. This approach addresses student needs, including academic support, technology assistance, housing, and food security. As such, student success coaches initiate this process by developing meaningful relationships with students and assessing their unique needs (Kovacich & Wetzstein, 2022). This assessment encompasses various dimensions, ensuring the support aligns with each student's circumstances and challenges. To facilitate informed decision-making, student success coaches proactively share information about available resources, both internal and external (Hall et al., 2021). This approach equips students with the knowledge to make choices that best suit their needs and circumstances. By providing this information, coaches empower students to take an active role in shaping their support network.

Beyond the initial connection to resources, student success coaches play a vital role in the ongoing support system. They follow up with students to ensure the accessible resources meet their needs. This iterative process allows for adjustments and refinements based on the evolving requirements of each student, providing a dynamic and responsive support structure (Pechac & Slantcheva-Durst, 2021). Moreover, student success coaches contribute to students' integration into college life by connecting them to various aspects of campus culture. This coaching involves orienting students to organizations, clubs, and events, fostering a sense of community and belonging (Valentine & Price, 2023). By actively engaging students in extracurricular opportunities, coaches contribute to a holistic college experience beyond academic endeavors.

Recommendations

Despite the growing interest in student success coaching, several notable areas for additional research. One area pertains to the effectiveness of different coaching models and approaches across diverse student populations. While existing studies provide insights into the impact of coaching on academic outcomes, there is a need for more nuanced investigations that explore how coaching strategies can be tailored to address the unique needs of specific student demographics, such as first-generation college students, underrepresented minorities, and students with disabilities. Additionally, there needs to be more research on the long-term effects of student success coaching beyond immediate academic performance and retention rates. Understanding the sustained impact of coaching on students' post-graduation outcomes, such as employment prospects and lifelong learning habits, represents another crucial area for future inquiry.

Potential research questions and directions for future studies may include:

1. How do different coaching models and approaches influence the academic success of diverse student populations, including first-generation college students, underrepresented minorities, and students with disabilities?
2. What are the long-term effects of student success coaching on students' post-graduation outcomes, such as employment attainment, career advancement, and lifelong learning habits?

Addressing these research questions and exploring these directions can significantly advance our understanding of student success coaching and inform evidence-based practices for supporting students' holistic development and academic achievement.

CONCLUSIONS

The literature review presented here holds several practical implications for educators, administrators, and policymakers. First, institutions should recognize the importance of tailoring coaching strategies to meet the unique needs of specific student demographics, such as first-generation college students, underrepresented minorities, and students with disabilities. Additionally, investing in comprehensive intervention programs that integrate academic support, personalized goal setting, and connection to resources can help break down barriers to student success. Moreover, leveraging technology to enhance the scalability and accessibility of coaching programs, particularly in virtual or hybrid learning environments, can broaden their reach and effectiveness.

In conclusion, student success coaching represents a promising approach to supporting students' development and academic achievement. While the literature highlights its positive influence on various educational outcomes, areas remain for further exploration and refinement. By addressing research gaps and adopting evidence-based practices, educators, administrators, and policymakers can enhance the efficacy of student success coaching initiatives and ultimately empower students to thrive in their educational journey. As student success coaches continue to evolve their understanding of coaching methodologies and their implications, the future of student success coaching holds immense promise in shaping the landscape of higher education and promoting equitable access to educational opportunities.

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